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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 26 April 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the European Union, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a declaration of the Presidency of the European Union on the decision adopted by the Palestinian National Council on the Palestinian Charter (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the decision adopted by the Palestinian National Council on the Palestinian Charter

The European Union congratulates President Arafat and the Palestinian National Council on their decision of 24 April 1996, taken by an overwhelming majority, to amend the Palestinian Charter so that it will no longer deny the right of the State of Israel to exist.

The European Union wishes to underline its continuing commitment to the cause of peace and democracy, courageously undertaken by the Palestinian people and its leadership. The decision to amend the Charter, which constitutes a confirmation of the strong Palestinian desire to fulfil its undertakings, shows how widespread the support for peace is among the Palestinians, and how limited the following of those who are opposed to it through violent means and terrorist actions.

In this respect, the European Union is confident that the Government of Israel will respond to this gesture of the Palestinians by:

- Implementing all the agreements, including the withdrawal from Hebron;
- Continuing the peace talks which are expected to resume on 7 May;
- Ending the closure which has been imposed on the West Bank and Gaza since the beginning of March.

Rome, 26 April 1996